United Nations A/C.4/61/SR.22

General Assembly
Sixty-first session

Official Records

Distr.: General
15 December 2006

Original: English

Special Political and Decolonization Committee (Fourth Committee)

Summary record of the 22nd meeting
Held at Headquarters, New York, on Monday, 6 November 2006, at 10 a.m.

Chairman: Mr. Acharya ..... (Nepal)

Contents

Agenda item 32: Report of the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Palestinian People and Other Arabs of the Occupied Territories

This record is subject to correction. Corrections should be sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned *within one week of the date of publication* to the Chief of the Official Records Editing Section, room DC2-750, 2 United Nations Plaza, and incorporated in a copy of the record.

Corrections will be issued after the end of the session, in a separate corrigendum for each Committee.

06-60293 (E)

The meeting was called to order at 10.15 a.m.

Agenda item 32: Report of the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Palestinian People and Other Arabs of the Occupied Territories (A/61/327-A/61/331 and A/61/500)

1. **Mr. Kariyawasam** (Sri Lanka), speaking as Chairman of the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Palestinian People and Other Arabs of the Occupied Territories, introduced the Special Committee's eighth report (A/61/500). He pointed out that the 2006 report was unusual in that it was based on documentary sources from non-governmental organizations and United Nations agencies, since the Special Committee had been forced, first by funding constraints and then by the worsening security situation in the area, to postpone its field visit. He said that an updated report would be submitted to the General Assembly in early 2007, following the rescheduled field visit, from 11 to 22 November 2006.

2. Noting with concern the culture of impunity which continued to characterize Israel's actions in the occupied Palestinian territories, he regretted that hopes engendered by recent positive developments in the area had not been realized. Instead the situation in the occupied territories had deteriorated further, following intensified military controls by Israel and the paralysis of the new Palestinian Government, provoked by its rejection of previously agreed conditions and its refusal to recognize Israel. The conditions in the occupied territories were exacerbated by the economic effects of the Israeli blockade, which hit women, children, the disabled and the elderly with particular severity, and by continuing hostilities between Palestinian militants and the Israeli military. In that context, it was reported that a major Israeli operation had killed at least 156 Palestinians, bringing the total Palestinian casualties over the previous six years to 2,300.

3. Reviewing the continued extension of the separation wall being built by Israel, he said that 365 km of its projected total length of 702 km would be in place by the end of 2006, and he enumerated the deleterious effects of the barrier on the lives of the affected Palestinian populations. In addition, the Israeli authorities had placed further restrictions on access to Israel by Palestinians, aggravating the humanitarian crisis in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip and impeding access by Palestinians to health care and other services. In addition, there had been numerous reports of the destruction during Israeli military operations of Palestinian property and infrastructure, including bridges, schools and a major power plant in Gaza, of ill-treatment of Palestinian civilians at crossing points by Israeli soldiers and of torture and ill-treatment of Palestinian detainees in Israeli jails, including women and children.

4. With reference to the Syrian Arab Republic, the report indicated that the Israeli settlement and land-confiscation practices were continuing unabated and provided details of new Israeli settlements and businesses in the occupied Syrian Golan. Concern was also caused by the depletion of water resources of the occupied Syrian Golan to supply Israeli enterprises and the dumping near the Syrian border of Israeli nuclear waste.

5. In conclusion, he conveyed the Special Committee's conviction that the continuing deterioration of the situation in the occupied Palestinian territories would lead to further violence and despair and, ultimately, to the very collapse of Palestinian society and its concern that the policies pursued in 2006 by the Quartet, including the European Union and other major donors, were counterproductive and perceived by the Palestinian people as unjustified sanctions. The Special Committee had essentially reiterated its 2005 recommendations, with the significant addition that the Security Council might consider imposing sanctions against Israel if it continued to flout its international obligations.

6. **Ms. Rasheed** (Observer for Palestine) expressed appreciation to the Special Committee for its report and drew attention also to the report of the Special Rapporteur of the Commission on Human Rights on the situation of human rights in the Palestinian territories occupied by Israel since 1967 (A/61/471), which provided a first-hand account of the harsh realities and deplorable human rights situation of the Palestinian people under Israeli occupation. Throughout the 39 years of Israeli occupation, the very existence of the Palestinian nation had been threatened and their collective and individual human rights had been systematically violated under a system of subjugation that represented an insidious form of colonization. In that context, she affirmed that Israel's systematic violations of international law, including the Fourth

Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, international human rights treaties and numerous Security Council and General Assembly resolutions, were tantamount to war crimes and State terrorism.

7. Noting the concern expressed in the Special Committee's report at the deteriorating situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territories and the mounting fatalities among the Palestinian population, due to extrajudicial assassinations and indiscriminate raids by the Israeli military, she drew attention to the particular plight of the besieged population in the Gaza Strip, where more than 350 Palestinians had been killed by Israel over the previous five months alone. In all, since September 2000, the disproportionate use of force by Israel had caused the deaths of more than 4,300 Palestinian civilians, including many women and children, and had injured more than 50,000. In that context, she stressed that Palestinian civilians — and especially children — were protected under international law and deplored the failure of the international community to provide such protection against the brutality of the occupying Power.

8. During the reporting period, the occupying Power continued to detain Palestinians, and more than 10,000 Palestinians, including over 120 women and 430 children, were held in deplorable conditions in Israeli prisons with restricted access to the outside world, including to family and legal representation. It also kidnapped more than 30 democratically elected Palestinian officials. Israel continued its widespread destruction of property and land, in particular by expanding the separation wall. According to the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics, 14,500 people had been forcibly displaced, and B'Tselem, the Israeli Information Centre for Human Rights in the Occupied Territories, predicted that the wall would forcibly displace approximately 90,000, in a practice elsewhere labelled ethnic cleansing. Should construction of the wall continue, in blatant disregard of the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice, approximately 60,500 Palestinians would live in the zone between the wall and the Green Line, and more than 500,000 would have no access to their families, farms or employment.

9. The wall was being built through Palestinian neighbourhoods in East Jerusalem and neighbourhoods on the eastern side of the wall were considered part of the West Bank, in order to make Jerusalem predominantly Jewish. A similar barrier had ghettoized Bethlehem and decimated a number of its Palestinian neighbourhoods. Both had serious human rights implications for resident Palestinians. The wall was a form of collective punishment and had compounded the severe restrictions on movement imposed by the occupying Power. Palestinians found themselves imprisoned in Bantustans or cantons as a result of those restrictions, which also hampered the delivery of emergency humanitarian relief assistance. The Palestinian economy had virtually collapsed with over 50 per cent of the population in the West Bank and Gaza Strip living below the poverty line. Health and education sectors had declined dramatically and sustainable development was impossible. Her delegation was studying the report of the Secretary-General pursuant to General Assembly resolution ES-10/15 as it was of the utmost importance that the Register of Damage recommended therein should serve its intended purpose.

10. Israel was continuing its illegal settlement activities by transferring more settlers into the Occupied Territory and into the Occupied Syrian Golan. The total number of settlers had reached 460,000, of which 200,000 lived in East Jerusalem. The armed settlers were authorized to act with impunity and without regard for the human rights of the Palestinian people. Israel had acknowledged that its wall served the political purpose of annexing its illegal settlements. The wall, the settlements and the nearly 500 Israeli checkpoints were destroying the territorial integrity of the Palestinian Territory and the fabric of Palestinian society, and were an obstacle to achieving the two-State solution.

11. With regard to the situation in Gaza, any attempts to distort the facts must be rejected: Israel controlled its air and sea space and its external borders. Despite an agreement to open the Rafah border crossing, all crossings remained largely closed. The closure of the Karni crossing for substantial periods of time had had serious consequences as it blocked access to the most basic necessities. Recent violent actions by Israel, including the deliberate killing of hundreds of Palestinian civilians, the wanton destruction of vital infrastructure, and the tactic of letting loose deafening sonic booms, had caused widespread fear and panic. Those actions had caused immeasurable hardships to refugees, who accounted for nearly 70 per cent of Gaza's population.

12. Illegal Israeli policies and practices had catastrophic consequences for the human rights situation of the Palestinian population. The occupying Power must be held accountable for its crimes against the Palestinian people. It must accept and comply with the Fourth Geneva Convention. It must also comply with international law and with agreements made with the Palestinian side, including the transfer of money belonging to the Palestinian Authority under the 1994 Protocol on Economic Relations between the Government of Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization. It was not possible to reconcile Israel's commitment to the rule of law with the human rights violations it committed. The occupation was the root cause of all problems and the remedy was a negotiated, just, political solution. In that regard, she urged the international community to work towards the attainment of a final settlement, with two States living side by side in peace and security.

13. **Mr. Taleb** (Syrian Arab Republic) deplored the fact that the Special Committee, which had been producing useful reports since its inception, had been kept from ever fully implementing its mandate by Israel's refusal to admit its representatives into the Palestinian and other Arab territories it had occupied and by security issues stemming from the unsafe situation created there by the barbaric Israeli war machine. The Special Committee must continue its investigative work, and the international community must bring the shameful chapter of Israel's criminal practices to an end. The world had been horrified when, in the summer of 2006, Israel had deliberately expanded its aggression to target Lebanon and the wider region, killing countless civilians and even United Nations peacekeepers, and not for the first time.

14. Israel refused to respect human rights and comply with international law as embodied in United Nations resolutions. It had repeatedly flouted, for example, the successive resolutions adopted by the Security Council, the General Assembly and the Commission on Human Rights that had condemned its annexation of the occupied Syrian Golan and had declared null and void the imposition of Israeli nationality on Syrian civilians and its attempt to change the Syrian nature of the Golan. As further evidence of its expansionism, Israel had since the occupation forced Syrian inhabitants off their lands and destroyed about 250 villages, and on the ruins of Arab villages it had thus far built almost 50 settlements, perpetuating its colonization of the Golan. Recently, it had launched a major project to attract 50,000 more Israeli settlers. His Government had informed the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (UNHCHR) of Israel's most recent displacement of village inhabitants from expropriated Arab land and had called for an investigation. A dam being built by Israel was also in violation of international law. The world was not aware of the full extent of the situation in the occupied Syrian Golan. The many landmines still buried in farmland, for instance, were an ever-present threat, most often harming Syrian children; and Israel was burying its nuclear waste there with no outside monitoring. Syrian citizens in the occupied Syrian Golan, however, had begun resisting by establishing their own State Council and flying the Syrian flag.

15. In the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, Israel was systematically conducting a lethal military campaign. It would soon complete construction of its separation wall on confiscated land, despite condemnation by the International Court of Justice and the General Assembly. As brought out in the Special Rapporteur's report, such actions violated the Fourth Geneva Convention ban on collective punishment of an entire people, as did the destruction of infrastructure and the restrictions on freedom of movement with their impact on the health, education and food security of the population. Furthermore, although Israel had left the Gaza Strip, it was using its continuing control of the airspace to make life even more difficult for the Palestinians.

16. At a July 2006 meeting of the Human Rights Council on the situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory and Other Occupied Arab Territories, the Council had called for the dispatch of an urgent mission by the Special Rapporteur, and had called upon Israel to end its military operations and release detained Palestinian leaders. His Government supported the Special Committee's recommendations regarding an urgent fact-finding mission by the Special Rapporteur and the payment of compensation by Israel for damage done as a result of its military incursions and operations.

17. The Israeli authorities had exploited the silence and impotence of the international community, but it was the responsibility of the United Nations to compel Israel to stop its crimes and genocide in the Occupied Palestinian and other Arab Territories. The Arab-Israeli conflict was the oldest conflict on the United Nations agenda, as old as the Organization itself, and many decades had passed since Israel had occupied Arab

lands. A solution was possible if there was political will. Arab States had put forward constructive peace proposals, the most recent being the Arab Peace Initiative presented at the 2002 Beirut summit of the Council of Arab States. Yet Israel, strong in its military power, held to its irresponsible position and refused peace.

18. **Mr. Adaileh** (Jordan) observed that the solution to the Arab-Israeli conflict, at the core of which lay the question of Palestine, would be the ending of the Israeli occupation and the establishment of an independent Palestinian State living side by side with Israel in peace. Through the Quartet, the international community should help the parties resume substantive negotiations so that peace could be achieved through partnership, mutual trust and respect for the fundamental rights of all the peoples of the region, rather than through the pursuit of pointless or irresponsible unilateral measures.

19. Jordan believed that the Special Committee should continue to carry out its mandate until Israel ended its occupation of Palestinian and other Arab Territories and a final peace agreement was reached, and it urged Israel to cooperate with it. Both the report of the Special Committee and that of the Special Rapporteur of the Human Rights Council on the situation of human rights in the Palestinian territories occupied since 1997 (A/61/470) documented a dangerous deterioration of the humanitarian situation in the West Bank and Gaza. Unemployment and poverty had soared; some 5,000 Palestinians had been killed and some 35,000 more injured by the deplorable shelling of civilians by Israel; targeted killings also continued, and large numbers of Palestinians remained in Israeli jails; the proliferation of checkpoints had cut Palestinian towns off from each other — to cite but a fraction of what the Palestinian people were enduring on a daily basis. The Government of Israel must discontinue its settlement activity and its construction of the separation wall in Palestinian territory, both of which contravened international law, and it must guarantee free movement of persons and goods and facilitate humanitarian assistance to the Palestinians. That would assist in the process of rebuilding confidence.

20. The Israeli practices in the Golan Heights, which included ongoing settlement activity, were also in violation of international law. Jordan called on Israel to desist from all illegal practices in the Occupied Arab Territories and to work instead with all concerned parties to achieve just and lasting peace in the region.

21. **Ms. Toledano** (Cuba) said it was regrettable that the Government of Israel had yet to authorize a visit by the Special Committee, whose work her delegation fully supported, to the Occupied Territory. It was evident that the Palestinian people continued to be systematically massacred and that the international community was unable to establish efficient mechanisms to put an end to that tragedy. Security Council draft resolutions designed to achieve a balanced approach to the crisis had been vetoed 29 times by the United States of America, whose veto use and double standards had effectively paralysed the Security Council on the question. Israel's lack of commitment was evident in a number of reports of the Secretary-General and its refusal to provide the necessary information required to carry out the General Assembly's mandate with respect to the question of Palestine.

22. The humanitarian situation in the Occupied Territory had deteriorated as unemployment and poverty had risen. The security situation had also deteriorated since the launching of Operation Summer Rain. Her delegation condemned Israel's intensive settlement of Palestinian territory and its serious breaches of international law by destroying and confiscating land and property, limiting the movement of and displacing Palestinians.

23. In blatant disregard of the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice and of General Assembly resolution ES-10/15, Israel had completed the construction of nearly half of the separation wall which separated and isolated millions of Palestinians. At its fourteenth Summit, the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries had condemned the illegal construction of the wall, which caused considerable physical and economic damage as well as social chaos and would make it impossible to achieve a solution to the crisis. The Movement had also stressed that the serious violations of the occupying Power and its policy of colonialism continued to be the primary obstacle to a peaceful solution.

24. Cuba welcomed the report of the Secretary-General on the general framework for the establishment of a register of damage pursuant to General Assembly resolution ES-10/15 and hoped that the future office of the Register of Damage would implement the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice. She reiterated once again the Palestinian people's inalienable right to a sovereign State with East Jerusalem as its capital and called for the unconditional

return of all Arab land occupied in June 1967, as the only way to achieve just and sustainable peace.

25. **Mr. Maqungo** (South Africa), welcoming the Special Committee's comprehensive, balanced report, expressed serious concern over Israel's continued lack of cooperation with either the Special Committee or the Special Rapporteur. Israel was denying itself a valuable opportunity to engage meaningfully with the international community and was undermining confidence in its commitment to a peaceful resolution of the Israeli-Palestinian crisis, the root cause of instability and violence throughout the Middle East.

26. The deteriorating human rights situation in the Occupied Territories could not be addressed in isolation. Since violence gave rise only to more violence, Israel must stop using air strikes in heavily populated areas and end its extrajudicial killings and illegal detentions; at the same time, the Palestinian militants must stop firing rockets on Israel. South Africa called upon Israel to immediately release the members of the Palestinian Legislative Council from detention and it encouraged the Palestinian Authority to work to secure the release of the Israeli soldier captured by Palestinian militants.

27. Israel, as an occupying Power, must, in line with the Fourth Geneva Convention, comply with its treaty obligations and recognize the applicability of the Convention to the Occupied Palestinian Territory and other Arab Territories.

28. The financial crisis the Palestinian Authority was experiencing — primarily due to Israel's withholding of Palestinian tax and customs revenues — contributed to instability and caused untold hardship to ordinary Palestinians. Such collective punishment was a contributing factor to the recent violence. A way must be found to enable the Palestinian Authority to deliver essential services to its people and improve social conditions. The economic embargo of the democratically elected Palestinian Government by some countries must also stop immediately. The Temporary International Mechanism set up by the European Union was helpful in alleviating some of the suffering, but it was only a temporary measure. The international community must act decisively to create a framework for the Palestinian Authority to receive funds from abroad. On the other hand, the failure of the Palestinian leaders to form a unity government would only result in further hardship.

29. No party to the conflict should take unilateral action in order to predetermine issues that could be resolved only through negotiation, as in the case of Israel's unlawful construction of the separation wall or its settlements, which must be dismantled. The checkpoints operated by Israel were a further source of tension and disgruntlement as the Palestinian people continued to be subjected to unjustified, degrading treatment; and they were also a major stumbling block to economic growth. Free movement and access must be guaranteed.

30. The peoples of both Palestine and Israel had a genuine desire for peace, and the security of the State of Israel was interwoven with that of its neighbours. The current hatred and violence could only be dispelled if Israel withdrew to the pre-1967 borders. At the same time, lasting peace and security could be achieved only through the full integration of Israel into the Middle Eastern community of nations. It was imperative for the Israeli Prime Minister and the Palestinian President to enter without delay into direct negotiations on a mutually agreed settlement within the framework of the road map.

31. South Africa reiterated its unwavering support for the establishment of an independent State of Palestine, with East Jerusalem as its capital, living side by side with Israel, both of them enjoying secure and internationally recognized borders. That vision of a two-State solution and the principle of land for peace underpinned any permanent settlement of the Middle East conflict.

32. **Mr. Al-Olaimi** (Kuwait) said that the Special Committee's report showed that Israel was continuing its arbitrary practices directed against the Palestinians and other Arabs in the Occupied Territories, in violation of international humanitarian law and the principles of human rights. As a result, the observance of human rights in the Territories had declined and the Palestinian people were living under extremely difficult economic and social conditions. The inhuman practices of the occupying forces — the use of excessive force which claimed many victims, the destruction of homes and infrastructure, the continuing Israeli settlements, the ban on freedom of movement which affected the general standard of living and access to health services and education, the building of the illegal separation wall — all were in flagrant violation of international humanitarian law, the Fourth Geneva Convention and the principles of human rights.

33. Israel must abide by Security Council resolution 1701 (2006) on Lebanon and pay compensation for the damage done there, and it should withdraw from all Occupied Palestinian Territories. Kuwait hoped that the Security Council itself would become more active and that the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) would ensure the safety and security of that area. Israel was also violating international law, international treaties and human rights in the occupied Syrian Golan.

34. Important international proposals had been put forward, especially by the Quartet and by regional and international bodies to end the Israeli aggression against the Palestinian people but unfortunately Israel had not been prevented from following its unreasonable, uncivilized attacks, which had only recently left dozens more dead and wounded. Kuwait firmly supported the Palestinian people in their struggle to recover their legitimate rights and achieve independence and the creation of a State on all their lands, with Jerusalem as its capital. It also believed that the Special Committee should continue its work until the end of the Israeli occupation. Israel should implement the Special Committee's recommendations, and the international community should put more pressure on it to end its flagrant violations and move towards a peace settlement, on the basis of the road map, the relevant General Assembly resolutions, and the principle of land for peace, so that a comprehensive and just peace could be established in the Middle East. Kuwait supported the Special Committee recommendation that the General Assembly should request the Security Council to consider sanctions against Israel if it persisted in paying no attention to its international obligations.

35. **Mr. Al-Rubai** (Iraq) said that, despite their own difficult circumstances, his countrymen remained mindful of the suffering of their brethren in Palestine. The United Nations had a long history of supporting Palestinian rights, and the concern of the international community for the unique religious and cultural character of the city of Jerusalem was reflected in resolutions condemning Israeli measures designed to alter it. There were also numerous international resolutions, supporting the sovereignty of both the Palestinian people in the Occupied Palestinian Territory and the Arab residents of the occupied Syrian Golan over their land and resources. His delegation supported all these resolutions and also the Arab consensus condemning Israeli practices in the Golan and occupied Palestinian territory.

36. Referring to the UNRWA Commissioner-General's comment on the persecution of Palestinians in Iraq, he pointed out that the ongoing terrorism in Iraq targeted everybody, including Iraqis and Palestinians. Nevertheless, his Government had opened an investigation into the sporadic attacks on Palestinians, and anyone found guilty of such crimes would be prosecuted to the full extent of the law.

37. **Mr. Alfalahi** (United Arab Emirates) expressed appreciation for the Special Committee's vital efforts to uncover the actual impact of the continuing Israeli occupation of the Palestinian and other Arab Territories, despite the refusal of the Israeli Government to cooperate with its investigations and the attempted Israeli information blackout regarding its inhumane practices and human rights violations.

38. The situation was deteriorating, as Israel continued not only to occupy Palestinian lands, pillage natural resources, loot the cultural heritage and prevent freedom of worship, but also to subject innocent Palestinians to collective punishments such as repeated military attacks, arbitrary arrests, extrajudicial killings, infrastructural destruction, blockades intended to impede freedom of movement, and the withholding of funds needed by the Palestinian Authority to ensure the basic living conditions of its people. Israel had persisted in taking unilateral actions that violated international humanitarian law and fundamental human rights, such as its current military operation in the Gaza Strip, or its illegal construction of further settlements and of an expansionist wall on Palestinian land, all of which could jeopardize the viability of a two-State solution.

39. Israel could not be allowed to go on with such practices with impunity. The international community must act urgently on the recommendations in the Special Committee's report, which should include the imposition of sanctions, the sending of an international commission of inquiry and the payment of appropriate compensation.

40. Other States and donors should reconsider their suspension of assistance to the Palestinian people since the election of the Hamas Government, in order to overcome the current humanitarian crisis and save the situation, which, if not contained, could expand to a conflagration in the entire region.

The meeting rose at 12.15 p.m.

United Nations A/C.4/61/SR.23

General Assembly
Sixty-first session

Official Records

Distr.: General
20 December 2006

Original: English

Special Political and Decolonization Committee (Fourth Committee)

Summary record of the 23rd meeting
Held at Headquarters, New York, on Tuesday, 7 November 2006, at 10 a.m.

Chairman: Mr. Acharya ..... (Nepal)
later: Mr. Andersson (Vice-Chairman) ..... (Sweden)

Contents

Agenda item 32: Report of the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Palestinian People and Other Arabs of the Occupied Territories (*continued*)

This record is subject to correction. Corrections should be sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned *within one week of the date of publication* to the Chief of the Official Records Editing Section, room DC2-750, 2 United Nations Plaza, and incorporated in a copy of the record.

Corrections will be issued after the end of the session, in a separate corrigendum for each Committee.

06-60457 (E)

The meeting was called to order at 10.15 a.m.

Agenda item 32: Report of the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Palestinian People and Other Arabs of the Occupied Territories (*continued*) (A/61/500, A/61/330, A/61/331, A/61/328, A/61/329 and A/61/327)

1. **Mr. Gidor** (Israel) said that the speeches delivered at Fourth Committee meetings did not produce any results or have any bearing on the well-being of the Palestinian people in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank. The preparation of resolutions, reports, statements and documents by the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Palestinian People and Other Arabs of the Occupied Territories represented a shameful waste of resources whose only effect was to further undermine the credibility of the United Nations. The full name of the Special Committee established a priori the conclusions of the investigations and reflected the one-sided nature of its mandate. The fact that less than half of that body's membership voted to renew the Special Committee's mandate reflected the international community's view of its work. His delegation called on Member States not to sanction the work of the Special Committee.

2. The Palestinians themselves should actively pursue measures in order to improve their own situation. In 2005, the living conditions of the Palestinian people had improved in terms of gross domestic product, volume of bilateral trade and a higher level of employment. In 2005, Israel had withdrawn its army and communities from Gaza and in February 2006 its people had elected a new Government committed to an unprecedented realignment of its forces and civilian population in the West Bank. It was unfortunate that the Palestinians had responded by electing a Hamas Government and by escalating Gaza-based terrorist activities directed against Israeli towns and villages. It was also unfortunate that the Palestinian leadership had not heeded the cautionary words of the Quartet, which had urged all parties to renounce violence and terror, to accept Israel's right to exist and to disarm in the framework of the road map. The international community had been left with no alternative but to sever links with the Hamas Government because the Palestinian leadership had continued to consolidate its terrorist links with the Syrian Arab Republic and the Islamic Republic of Iran. Hamas itself was responsible for plunging the Palestinian people into deeper levels of misery, deprivation and despair. His Government could not be held responsible for the consequences of the poor choices made by others. The Palestinians were free to elect a peace-pursuing Government.

3. His Government wished to make it clear that it was willing to discuss the human rights situation in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. Each year the situation in that region was examined by foreign government agencies, including the United States Department of State, the European Union, United Nations bodies and non-governmental organizations (NGOs). However, it was a pity that those bodies investigated Israeli actions but did not investigate the actions of the Palestinian Authority, which violated the human rights of its own people. It was important to ask why the Special Committee only investigated the actions of one side. That imbalance did not stop with the Special Committee. The Division for Palestinian Rights and the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People were two other redundant bodies that disseminated anti-Israeli propaganda and did not adhere to the principles of the Charter of the United Nations. In that regard, during 2006-2007, the Organization had spent an astonishing $6.7 million of regular budget funds on the Special Committee, the Division for Palestinian Rights, the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People and the special information programme run by the Department of Public Information, compared with the regular budget of $9.7 million earmarked for Africa.

4. The draft resolution under consideration claimed to deal with the latest events in the Gaza Strip but in fact recycled familiar anti-Israeli rhetoric. It was important to provide an accurate account of the latest events in the Gaza Strip, which included an Israeli military counter-terrorist operation that had been concluded on 7 November 2006 and that had been triggered by the daily attacks of Qassam rockets directed against the civilian population centres deep inside Israeli Territory. The work of the Special Committee did not serve the agenda or priorities of the United Nations as a member of the Quartet. His Government called on Member States to withdraw their support for the Special Committee, whose report had presented a one-sided picture of the situation in that region, and urged the Palestinians to focus on finding a

peaceful solution by severing all links with terrorist groups, accepting all existing agreements and reopening direct and sincere peace negotiations. It called on Member States to take constructive measures to assist the Israeli and Palestinian peoples in their attempt to find a solution to the conflict.

5. **Mr. Ali** (Sudan) said that the Palestinian people were being subjected to collective punishment for daring to exercise their democratic right to elect a Government of their choice: international assistance had been suspended, while Israel withheld tax revenues owed to the Palestinian Authority. Those and other brutal Israeli measures, of which the merciless attack on a peaceful women's demonstration in Beit Hanoun was but one more example, were aimed at breaking the Palestinians' steadfast resistance over the previous half century. The construction by Israel of the separation wall in the West Bank, in defiance of the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice continued unabated, and Palestinians from all walks of life continued to suffer from ill-treatment at the hands of Israeli soldiers.

6. Internationally recognized resolutions were unanimous in regarding the Israeli Knesset's resolution annexing the Golan as null and void and in condemning Israel's behaviour there. But Israel continued to implement policies in the Golan, such as the recent excavations for the construction of a dam in violation of the Disengagement Agreement and the Geneva Conventions, that clearly demonstrated it was not interested in peace. It also continued to dump nuclear waste near the Syrian border and lay mines that caused death and interfered with agricultural production.

7. Although the Committee had been prevented by Israel from making field visits to the Occupied Territories, its report contained sufficient evidence of the deterioration in living conditions there. The Zionist entity's claims of self-defence were a spurious pretext for policies that were creating a human catastrophe at all levels. The international community must put an end to Israel's inhumane practices and force it to comply with international resolutions. His delegation supported the recommendations of the Special Committee, particularly the one regarding the imposition of possible sanctions against Israel if it persisted in ignoring its international obligations; it also supported the draft resolution on Israeli practices.

8. **Mr. Huimasalo** (Finland), speaking on behalf of the European Union; the acceding countries Bulgaria and Romania; the candidate countries Croatia, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Turkey; the stabilization and association process countries Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Serbia; and, in addition, Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway, the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine, said that the European Union remained committed to the two-State solution laid out in the road map and agreed by the parties. That solution would result in a viable, contiguous, sovereign and independent Palestinian State existing side by side with Israel in peace and security. The established European Union position did not recognize any change to the pre-1967 borders other than those arrived at by agreement between the parties.

9. There was an urgent need to work together on finding a comprehensive and peaceful solution to the Arab-Israeli conflict. The European Union remained deeply concerned at the continued Israeli operation in the Palestinian Territories and deplored the resultant loss of civilian life. It called on the Palestinian leadership to bring an end to violence and terrorist activities and urged the Government of Israel not to resort to disproportionate action in exercising its legitimate right to self-defence or to carry out extrajudicial killings, which were contrary to international law. It called for the immediate and unconditional release of the abducted Israeli soldier and the immediate release of Palestinian ministers and legislators in Israeli custody. The fact that some detainees were not promptly informed of the reason for their detention was a matter for concern.

10. The European Union acknowledged the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice on the Legal Consequences of the Construction of a Wall in the Occupied Palestinian Territory. It demanded that the Government of Israel should stop and reverse the construction of the separation barrier in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including in and around Jerusalem. Construction of that barrier could prejudge the final borders of a future Palestinian State. The European Union urged the Government of Israel to cease all activities in the Palestinian Territories, including settlement building, the construction of the separation barrier and the demolition of Palestinian homes. The Government of Israel must cease all discriminatory treatment of Palestinians in East Jerusalem and fully implement the Agreement on

Movement and Access. It should facilitate the delivery of humanitarian assistance and reopen the crossings. Clarification should also be provided on the exact rules and procedures applied to European Union citizens wishing to visit Israel or the Palestinian Territories. The European Union supported President Abbas and urged Palestinians to join his efforts towards national unity and the formation of a Government reflecting the Quartet principles. It reiterated its continuing support to Israeli and Palestinian efforts to advance the peace process.

11. **Mr. Ahmad** (Pakistan), noting that his delegation supported the work of the Special Committee, expressed deep concern over the escalation in violence and the continuing deterioration of the socio-economic and humanitarian situation in the Occupied Territories. The hardship and financial crisis had been exacerbated by the social and economic blockade and the withholding of value added tax and customs payments by the Government of Israel. The continuing construction of the separation wall, the expansion of settlements and restrictions on the free access and movement of Palestinians were human rights violations in themselves. With regard to the wall, his delegation expected an early establishment of the Register of Damage. Extrajudicial killings, illegal detention and the torture and inhumane treatment of detainees were the worst signs of occupation. It was distressing that the number of Palestinian prisoners in Israeli jails exceeded 9,000. The Special Committee's observation that conditions in the Occupied Territories had considerably worsened since 1968 was particularly alarming. He called on all sides to reject violence and to respect their obligations under international human rights and humanitarian law.

12. It was necessary to end the occupation in order to stop the violations of the human rights of the Palestinian people. Pakistan supported the legitimate struggle for self-determination and freedom of the Palestinian people. The Organization had a responsibility to resolve the question of Palestine in all its aspects in a satisfactory manner in accordance with international law. A just, lasting and peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine was necessary to establish lasting peace and stability in the Middle East. A durable solution could not be imposed by force or unilateral actions.

13. Simultaneous confidence-building measures were needed to pave the way for negotiations. Israel should, inter alia, end its military campaign in Gaza, release Palestinian prisoners, halt construction of the separation wall, freeze settlement activities, release customs and value added tax payments to the Palestinian Authority and accept negotiations with the Palestinian Authority led by President Abbas. The Palestine side should halt rocket attacks and violence, secure the release of the captured Israeli soldier, and establish a national unity Government under President Abbas to open negotiations with the Government of Israel, among other things.

14. Those confidence-building measures should lead to resumption of direct peace negotiations and a new timeframe should be set for the attainment of the two-State solution. Efforts should also be undertaken in parallel to achieve negotiated lasting settlements between Israel and Lebanon and between Israel and the Syrian Arab Republic.

15. **Mr. Islam** (Bangladesh) said that, while some developments in the Occupied Territory had raised hopes that the situation was improving, they had quickly evaporated in the wake of Israel's continued use of counterproductive policies and practices. The human rights situation had reached a new low following unprecedented violence in June 2006. Israeli actions to subdue the legitimate Palestinian resistance had violated all known international humanitarian norms.

16. It was dismaying to note that the November 2005 Agreement on Movement and Access had failed to improve the situation. Instead, heavier restrictions on movement had been imposed on Palestinian goods, services and people, taking economic activities below subsistence levels. Israel's sanctions and closure regimes had increased unemployment and poverty, aggravating the humanitarian situation. Despite international condemnation, Israel continued to build the separation wall well inside Palestinian Territory, destroying Palestinian settlements and cutting off Palestinian access to basic necessities. The wall and Israeli segregation policies undermined the territorial integrity of Palestine, sapped the morale of the Palestinian nation, and constituted serious impediments to the road map and to the achievement of a two-State solution. The construction of the wall must be stopped and existing segments dismantled without delay.

17. Israel, the occupying Power, was systematically trampling the basic human rights of the Palestinian

people in complete disregard of its obligations under the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War. Bangladesh was gravely concerned about Israeli practices in the Occupied Territory, supported the inalienable right of the Palestinian people to a sovereign homeland, called on Israel to withdraw its forces from the Occupied Territory, to exercise restraint and to halt its violent policies and practices. His delegation was deeply troubled by the unprecedented levels of anger, misery and disillusionment with the role of the United Nations among the Palestinian people, and their belief that they were being neglected by the international community. Noting that the Quartet road map was important to the peaceful resolution of the conflict, he expressed his delegation's full support for the Committee's recommendations.

18. **Ms. Djeffal** (Algeria) said that Israel had once again confirmed its contempt for the international community by launching an unrestrained military campaign against Gaza civilians. Rather than correcting the wrongs it had committed, Israel questioned the validity of the work of and refused to cooperate with the Special Committee. She reiterated her delegation's support for the Special Committee and noted that its indispensable work would not be completed until the occupying Power ended its inhuman practices against the Palestinian people.

19. Israel continued to commit, in total impunity, large-scale human rights and international humanitarian law violations in the Occupied Territory. Israel's repressive policies served only to fuel the hatred that would generate future crises in the Middle East. Israel had expressed its compassion for Palestine refugees and its desire to live in peace with its Palestinian neighbours, yet its excessive and disproportionate use of force against unarmed civilians, and its policy of demolishing houses, and bombing infrastructure and agricultural land to make their lives unbearable, were not neighbourly. Moreover, she hoped that Israel's action in Lebanon were not a sign of the good neighbourly relations it envisioned for the region. It was not by chance that one of the first actions of the newly established Human Rights Council was to dispatch an urgent fact-finding mission headed by the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Palestinian territories occupied since 1967; indeed, it was troubling to note that human rights violations had increased and that the economic and social situation had deteriorated since Israel withdrew from Gaza. Israel's right to self-defence and the fight against terrorism were repeatedly used as pretexts for unrestrained attacks against Palestinians. The exercise by the Palestinian people of their democratic right to elect their own leaders in early 2006 merely served as an additional incentive to Israel to inflict collective punishment on them.

20. The Gaza Strip had been transformed into a vast prison. It was regrettable that donors had been blackmailed by Israel into withholding aid to Palestinians; the net effect was abject poverty, widespread despair and unemployment — all dangerous ingredients in an already unstable region. Israel continued to defy international law, including the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice, by its building of the separation wall, and to disregard United Nations resolutions urging implementation of the road map. Israel's settlement policies were inconsistent with the provision under the road map for the establishment of two States, living side by side in peace. Her delegation was also concerned about the harassment of the residents of the Occupied Syrian Golan, who were being forced to accept Israeli identities. Finally, Algeria endorsed the Special Committee's recommendations, in particular the recommendation encouraging the media to give wide coverage to the human rights and humanitarian crisis in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, in order to highlight the dire humanitarian situation endured by the people of Palestine, and to prevent its trivialization.

21. *Mr. Andersson (Sweden), Vice-Chairperson, took the Chair.*

22. **Mr. Maleki** (Islamic Republic of Iran) said that the work of the Special Committee should continue. Although the Special Committee's report was incomplete, it clarified the brutal practices of the occupying Power. The Special Committee should be granted access to the Occupied Territory in order to gather complete information. In view of the lack of information, his delegation supported dispatching regular fact-finding missions of the Special Committee and of the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights on Palestinian territories occupied since 1967.

23. The humanitarian and economic situation in the Occupied Territory, including the Occupied Syrian Golan, had further deteriorated owing to Israel's

relentless military campaign. Israel continued to subject women and children to all kinds of violence. The illegal construction of the separation wall continued, as did its dire humanitarian consequences, including restrictions on movement, lack of access to basic necessities and a corralling of Palestinians that in other countries would be called ethnic cleansing. The wall required the immediate attention of the international community. His delegation fully supported the recommendations contained in the Special Committee's report, including the recommendations requesting the Security Council to ensure that Israel complied with the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice and General Assembly resolution ES-10/15, and requested the Council to consider sanctions against Israel if it persisted in paying no attention to its international obligations; and to ensure that other States were not directly or indirectly assisting in the construction of the wall and that bilateral agreements between Israel and other States did not violate their obligations under international law.

24. As in previous years, independent journalists covering events in the Occupied Territories were often victims of Israeli violence and his delegation called on the Secretary-General to seek ways to assist them in safely and fully discharging their duties. Finally, boycotting and paralysing the democratically elected Palestinian Government was unjustifiable; it was indeed regrettable that certain countries had taken the unacceptable step of punishing the Palestinian people for exercising their right to elect a government of their choice. That kind of behaviour only emboldened the occupying Power to commit more crimes and human rights violations.

25. **Mr. Khallaf** (Saudi Arabia) said that Israel was able to persist in its refusal to allow the Committee to visit the Occupied Territories, and most recently refuse to allow the new Human Rights Council to send a fact-finding mission there, because of the wilful disregard of some and the inaction of the entire international community. On the West Bank, the continued construction of the separation wall was an example of Israeli policies that cut Palestinians off from relatives, land, schools, livelihoods and services. The recent attack on Beit Hanoun had been the latest example of the escalation of Israel's aggression against the Gaza Strip, which the Israeli Prime Minister had announced would continue until further notice.

26. Although it had withdrawn from the Gaza Strip, the Israeli army still controlled air, land and sea crossing points. The exercise by the Palestinians of their right to choose their Government in legitimate elections, far from improving their situation, had resulted in the paralysis of their economy owing to the withholding of international assistance and Israel's refusal to pay tax revenues collected on behalf of the Palestinian Authority, while Israeli banks were no longer allowed to have any contact with Palestinian banks. Those measures would inevitably lead to an increase in both poverty and acts of violence borne of despair. In the face of Israel's disregard of international resolutions and obstruction of peace efforts, the Special Committee needed to take all necessary measures to ensure implementation of the recommendations contained in its reports.

27. **Mr. Mbuende** (Namibia) said that the work of the Special Committee was an important component of the work of the United Nations. It was therefore of utmost importance that the Committee should be given the support necessary to carry out its work unhindered. It was regrettable that the Committee had not been given permission to undertake field visits to the Occupied Palestinian Territory, as reporting on the basis of first-hand information was always best. He hoped that the Committee would be allowed to visit the Occupied Territories in the future and that the field trips to Egypt, Jordan and the Syrian Arab Republic would take place as scheduled.

28. The most fundamental human right, the right to life, was being violated on a daily basis in the Occupied Territories. It was important to realize, however, that no amount of killing or detention or torture would kill the yearning of the Palestinian people for freedom and self-determination. It was equally important to realize that the destruction of the State of Israel was neither feasible nor desirable. The only sustainable solution was the peaceful co-existence of the State of Palestine with the State of Israel. He called upon members of the Quartet to implement the road map to achieve lasting peace.

29. **Mr. Kanaan** (Observer for Palestine), speaking in exercise of the right of reply, said that it was strange to hear the Israeli representative talking about the well-being of the Palestinian people and the waste of United Nations resources when Israel continued its aggression against the Palestinian people. Israel had to end its occupation of the Occupied Palestinian Territory,

including East Jerusalem, and the other Occupied Territories. Only then would the Palestinian people be able to achieve true well-being by establishing an independent Palestinian State. The Organization's resources could then be reallocated for other purposes. Israel's withdrawal from the Gaza Strip had not ended the Israeli occupation. Indeed, Israel was now reinforcing its occupation of Gaza and other Palestinian territories. The so-called "Autumn Clouds" operation, which might more properly be called the "Clouds of Occupation", was actually an operation aimed at collectively punishing the Palestinian people. It had resulted in the deaths of more than 60 Palestinian civilians, including, women and children, destroyed infrastructure and private homes, and prevented ambulances and medical personnel from carrying out their humanitarian work.

30. The Israeli representative had said that the Palestinian leadership was not abiding by the conditions of the Quartet, but had failed to mention Israel's non-compliance with legitimate international resolutions and international law, including international humanitarian law. He had talked about the openness of Israeli society and its concern for human rights, but had not mentioned the Israeli occupation forces' violations of the human rights of the Palestinian people in the Occupied Territories. The importance of the work of the Special Committee had once again been demonstrated, as had the need for that work to continue for as long as Israel continued its aggression and its human rights violations. No peace or stability could be achieved in the region until the Israeli occupation of Palestinian territory and other Arab lands ended and the Palestinian people were able to exercise their right to self-determination and to the establishment of an independent national state.

31. **Mr. Maleki** (Islamic Republic of Iran), speaking in exercise of the right of reply, said that his Government categorically rejected the false and baseless accusations levelled against the Islamic Republic of Iran by the representative of Israel. The Israeli regime had always suffered from a lack of legitimacy, so it was natural and predictable that its delegation would make such fabricated accusations against other countries. It had become a tired practice for the delegation of the Israeli regime to raise baseless and absurd allegations against others in a fruitless attempt to divert the international community's attention away from its horrendous terrorist attacks and crimes against humanity. The Israeli regime's delegation must explain to the Committee why Israel continued to perpetrate State terrorism, killing, war crimes and crimes against humanity; why it continued to occupy the Arab territories in violation of international law; and why it continued to pay no heed to the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice regarding the construction of the illegal separation wall, which had been condemned by the international community as a symbol of injustice. Indeed, it had come to be known as the "apartheid wall". His Government had long supported the Palestinian resistance against foreign occupation, and would continue its cooperation with any Palestinian Government established as a result of a democratic process.

32. **Mr. Taleb** (Syrian Arab Republic), speaking in exercise of the right of reply, said that by talking about the United Nations and its resources, the representative of Israel had once again tried to divert the Committee's attention away from the discussion of his country's violation of human rights in the Occupied Territories. He disregarded the fact that Israel had not implemented the relevant United Nations resolutions. The responsibility of the United Nations in respect of the Palestine question in general, and the violations of human rights in the Occupied Territories in particular, was a historic, moral and legal one which flowed from the Charter itself. Israel had refused to receive the Special Committee yet it claimed that the Committee's report was one-sided. If Israel had nothing to hide, why had successive Israeli Governments refused to allow the Committee to visit the Occupied Territories? Israel continued to ignore and defy international law and to practise State terrorism and organized crime. He appealed to the international community, just once, to hold Israel to account.

33. **Mr. Gidor** (Israel), speaking in exercise of the right of reply, said that it was always very instructive to be lectured on terrorism by the Syrian Arab Republic and the Islamic Republic of Iran, the world's two leading authorities on the subject. It was no less comical to be lectured on human rights by representatives of countries that were famously open, liberal and democratic, countries where women were denied the most basic human rights and privileges and were sometimes forcibly circumcised, where the justice system was medieval and freedom of speech was a mythical concept. He wondered whether the

representative of the Sudan could also indicate the source of his fantastical figures concerning Palestinian casualties. Did they come from the famously reliable and free Sudanese press? Perhaps he had confused the issue under discussion with the genocidal activities of his own Government in Darfur. His Iranian colleague represented one of the world's darkest regimes, headed by a President who denied the Holocaust and whose Government was busy amassing weapons of mass destruction. The very fact that such a regime embraced the Special Committee's report was highly indicative of that report's professional standards.

34. The Fourth Committee had become a venue in which the representatives of the world's most oppressive and backward-looking regimes took turns criticizing the only democracy in the Middle East. The Fourth Committee should restore its reputation as a serious and reliable United Nations organ by terminating, once and for all, the mandate of the Special Committee.

35. **Mr. Ali** (Sudan), speaking in exercise of the right of reply, said that the figures he had cited came from the report of the Special Committee (A/61/500), not the Sudanese press, although the mass media had indeed documented for all to see Israel's massacre of Palestinians. In fact, the figures being cited in the Sudanese press were even worse than those in the report. As for what was happening in Darfur, that was not the issue under discussion, and in any case the situation in Darfur would soon be resolved.

36. Noting the representative of Israel's reference to backward regimes, he wondered whether there was anything more backward than occupation, throwing children into prison, preventing doctors from functioning and patients from going to hospital, and demolishing homes and burying their occupants inside. In his view, Israel should be ashamed of labelling other governments as backward.

37. **Mr. Taleb** (Syrian Arab Republic), speaking in exercise of the right of reply, said that the report of the Special Committee and the reports submitted by the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Palestinian territories occupied since 1967 confirmed that Israel continued to bombard the Gaza Strip and that it continued its assassination of Palestinians. Those reports highlighted issues relating to food, poverty and the deterioration of public health in the occupied territories. Those issues should be the focus of the Committee's discussion, but the representative of Israel wanted to avoid discussing them and insisted on talking about other matters instead. He claimed that his Government, which everyone knew was an occupation Government, was democratic, but he deliberately avoided mentioning that his Government, which wanted to give others lessons in democracy, had not respected the will of the Palestinian people. Democracy meant respecting the will of others, but the supposedly democratic Government of Israel sought, instead, to impose its will on others by detaining the leaders of the Palestinian people and by engaging in State terrorism and organized crime. He therefore reiterated his support for the work of the Special Committee.

38. **Mr. Maleki** (Islamic Republic of Iran), speaking in exercise of the right of reply, said that it was ridiculous and laughable for the representative of Israel to claim that the Israeli regime was the only democracy in the Middle East. If Israel was the model for democracy, his country would prefer not to have democracy at all, particularly if it resulted in the establishment of a government that behaved like a savage animal, massacring innocent people.

The meeting rose at 11.55 a.m.

United Nations A/C.4/61/SR.24

General Assembly
Sixty-first session

Official Records

Distr.: General
20 December 2006

Original: English

Special Political and Decolonization Committee (Fourth Committee)

Summary record of the 24th meeting
Held at Headquarters, New York, on Wednesday, 8 November 2006, at 10 a.m.

Chairman: Mr. Acharya ..... (Nepal)

Contents

Agenda item 32: Report of the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Palestinian People and Other Arabs of the Occupied Territories (*continued*)

This record is subject to correction. Corrections should be sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned *within one week of the date of publication* to the Chief of the Official Records Editing Section, room DC2-750, 2 United Nations Plaza, and incorporated in a copy of the record.

Corrections will be issued after the end of the session, in a separate corrigendum for each Committee.

06-60782 (E)

The meeting was called to order at 10.20 a.m.

Agenda item 32: Report of the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Palestinian People and Other Arabs of the Occupied Territories (*continued*) (A/61/327-331 and A/61/500)

1. **Mr. Song** Se-il (Democratic People's Republic of Korea) said that the Palestinian people's just struggle to recover their territory and achieve self-determination had been impeded by Israel and its political and military backers. The continuing military conflict between Israel and Palestine and the worsening humanitarian situation of the Palestine refugees was a matter of great international concern. The internationally endorsed settlement of the issues had not been implemented because of the occupying Power's expansionism and obstruction. Some United Nations members were seeking to have the items relating to the Middle East removed from the agenda of the General Assembly under the pretext of reform but actually in order to serve their own interests in that area. The issues must be settled in keeping with the interests of the Palestinian and Arab peoples, and in accordance with past General Assembly resolutions and international law.

2. **Mr. Elsherbini** (Egypt) said that Israel continued to violate international law, in particular the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, by escalating its indiscriminate military incursions into the Occupied Territory, increasing frustration among Palestinians and blocking a comprehensive political solution. His delegation was deeply concerned by Israel's refusal to allow the Special Committee to investigate Israeli Practices affecting the Human Rights of the Palestinian People and of the Arabs of the Occupied Territories to visit the Occupied Territory.

3. A number of considerations contained in the report of the Special Committee needed to be addressed. The international community should become more involved in the human rights situation in the Occupied Territory, in particular the unprecedented rise in anger and misery levels and the feeling among Palestinians that they had been neglected by the international community. The General Assembly should support the Human Rights Council's urgent fact-finding mission headed by the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Palestinian territories occupied since 1967 and the Council's call for Israel to exercise restraint in its military activities. Israel should respect the Agreement on Movement and Access and internationally accepted standards for human rights, including the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. In view of Israel's construction of the separation wall, isolating the Palestinian people and defying the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice, his delegation welcomed the Register of Damage established pursuant to General Assembly resolution ES-10/15. Israel should withdraw from all Occupied Territory, including the occupied Syrian Golan, occupied in violation of Security Council resolution 497 (1981).

4. Violence had not and would not grant Israel the security it sought, nor had it improved the situation of the Palestinian people. His delegation called on the international community and the Quartet to ensure that Israel implemented its obligations under the road map. Egypt remained committed to a negotiated two-State solution and would continue to support efforts to establish just and lasting peace in the Middle East.

5. **Mr. Alshami** (Yemen) said that the report of the Special Committee clearly reflected the unprecedented deterioration of the human rights situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory as a result of Israel's aggression and its policy of collective punishment. It continued to construct its separation wall, disregarding the condemnation of the International Court of Justice and the General Assembly. The Territory was facing increasing economic difficulty not only because of the suspension of donor aid but also because of the Israeli refusal to pay the tax revenues that were due to the Palestinian Authority. The residents of the occupied Syrian Golan as well were suffering because of Israel's illegal practices. Yemen strongly condemned the massacre committed earlier that day in Beit Hanun in the Gaza Strip as an act of State terrorism. Such heinous crimes being committed by Israel in full view of the world would only create more conflict, tension and instability. The United Nations must shoulder its responsibilities and act to put an end to them.

6. A just, comprehensive and lasting peace would not be established in the region until Israel withdrew to its pre-1967 borders, until the Palestine refugee problem was resolved justly in accordance with United Nations resolutions, and until a sovereign Palestinian State, with Jerusalem as its capital, as called for in the Arab Peace Initiative and successive United Nations

resolutions, was established. The international community should act on the Arab request to revive the peace process in order to end an occupation that had lasted too long. Until then, Israel, as occupying Power, should abide by the Fourth Geneva Convention.

7. The Special Committee, which did much to expose Israeli practices, should carry on with its work and any obstacle to its full performance should be removed. Yemen supported the Special Committee's recommendations regarding the dispatch of an urgent fact-finding mission headed by the Special Rapporteur of the Human Rights Council, the payment of compensation by Israel for the damage it had inflicted in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, and the consideration of sanctions against Israel by the Security Council if it persisted in disregarding its international obligations.

8. **Mr. Mubarak** (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya) expressed regret that the Special Committee had been unable to perform its work properly because of lack of funds and because of restrictions placed upon it by Israel.

9. The tragedy of the Palestinian people was as old as the Organization itself. The situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory was deteriorating daily. The Special Committee had calculated that Israel had committed almost 60,000 violations over the past two years, killing almost 700 people and injuring over 3,000 others. It had established thousands of checkpoints, confiscated thousands of hectares of land, committed extrajudicial killings, demolished homes, and built the separation wall, which was having a deleterious impact on all aspects of life in the Territory. There was also the tragic situation of the detainees — over 700,000 prisoners since 1967, equivalent to 25 per cent of the entire Palestinian population. Currently more than 10,000 were being held, including women, children and political leaders. A psychologist was needed to explain how a people who had been the victim of criminal acts in the past century could perpetrate such crimes now against Palestinians.

10. He wondered why the international community was silent, as it watched the violation of principles it had always upheld. Some nations, clearly following a political agenda, practised a doubled standard, raising an outcry if any Israeli interest was attacked but showing no care as the human rights of the Palestinians were trampled.

11. The international community had failed to stop Israel from carrying out its own well-known agenda. A new way must be found to deal with all aspects of the Palestinian question, and Israel must be held to its obligations under international conventions, especially the Fourth Geneva Convention. It must halt settlement activity and stop construction of the separation wall. The fact that Israeli troops had withdrawn from the Gaza Strip had not affected its status as an occupied Territory. The situation in the occupied Syrian Golan was no less tragic: there, Israel was imposing its laws and its control in an attempt to wipe out Arab identity, exploiting the resources of the land and using it as a dumping-ground for nuclear waste.

12. His Government also supported the recommendations of the Special Committee regarding an urgent fact-finding mission headed by the Special Rapporteur and the consideration of sanctions against Israel by the Security Council. Lack of funds should never be used as a pretext for failing to support the Special Committee's investigative work, since resolution 60/104 had called upon the Secretary-General to provide that Committee with all necessary facilities.

13. **Mr. Al-Zayani** (Bahrain) observed that the Special Committee's report shed light on the state of affairs in the Occupied Palestinian Territories, but by shutting the door on the Committee, Israel had undermined its ability to collect full information and monitor what was happening in the field. The information was alarming: economic deterioration, rising tension as Israel intensified its oppression in order to curb the aspirations for liberation of the Palestinians in the Gaza Strip and the Syrians in the Golan.

14. The Human Rights Council had been prompted to hold a special session in July, at the close of which it had expressed its concerns in resolution S-1/1. Yet the attacks on peaceful Palestinian civilians, unrestrained by any moral or legal considerations, had only grown more vicious, backed by highly accurate and sophisticated weapons. The Arab League Council had remained in session during the current month in order to continue to monitor the Israeli attacks on Gaza, having issued a strong condemnation of recent Israeli aggression, which was further proof of Israel's insistence on shattering the peace process and spreading chaos and instability in the region.

15. The occupation was in itself a violation of human rights. The Israeli policy of annexation was illegitimate and contrary to the 1907 Hague Convention, the Fourth Geneva Convention, and the various General Assembly and Security Council resolutions declaring Israeli settlements illegal and reaffirming the application of the Fourth Geneva Convention in the territories occupied by Israel since 1967.

16. Israel had nevertheless further entrenched itself by continuing to build the separation wall along a route that would encircle 40 additional kilometres of Palestinian land, including a section around Jerusalem, thus changing the nature and status of the city in violation of Security Council resolution 478 (1980), and despite the international condemnation of the entire project by the International Court of Justice and the General Assembly. Both the Special Rapporteur and the Special Committee had detailed in their reports the impact of the wall on all aspects of Palestinian life. Israel claimed that the purpose of building it was to prevent terrorist attacks, but it was doing so purely out of political, not security, considerations.

17. In the occupied Syrian Golan, Israel had also entrenched itself, imposing its laws, jurisdiction and administration in an attempt to change its character and legal status as part of an annexation which various United Nations resolutions had declared null and void. Ignoring the international community, Israel had pursued its policies, building settlements, confiscating land, systematically erasing the Arab culture, exploiting the Golan's water resources, planting landmines along the buffer zone and burying its nuclear wastes there.

18. The United Nations had long proclaimed the inalienability of the right to self-determination and called for peace throughout the world. Peace was therefore a strategic option in the Palestinian and other Occupied Territories: it would require Israeli compliance with international treaty obligations, full implementation of United Nations resolutions, especially Security Council resolution 242 (1967) and resolution 338 (1973), observance of the land-for-peace principle, the Quartet road map and the Arab Peace Initiative, and the establishment of a Palestinian State with East Jerusalem as its capital.

19. **Mr. Al-Henzab** (Qatar) said the Special Committee's report showed that levels of frustration and anger had reached unprecedented levels; it was therefore imperative to step up efforts to find a solution in accordance with General Assembly and Security Council resolutions. Israeli practices were depriving the Palestinian people of their fundamental rights. The standard of living had deteriorated following the decision to inflict collective punishment on the Palestinian people for daring to exercise their democratic right to elect a Hamas Government by suspending financial assistance to the Palestinian Authority. According to the report, Israel continued to use excessive military force against civilians, carry out extrajudicial killings, destroy property and treat Palestinian and other Arab detainees in an inhumane manner. Those actions represented a flagrant breach of international law, Security Council resolutions and the Fourth Geneva Convention and should be stopped immediately. In violation of international law, Israeli authorities continued to build settlements in the Occupied Palestinian Territories. Those settlements and the construction of the separation wall were impeding efforts to find a just and comprehensive peace solution. Israel should comply with the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice and United Nations resolutions and halt the construction of the separation wall.

20. The General Assembly had repeatedly indicated that Israel's practices in relation to the occupied Syrian Golan were illegal and had called on its Government to comply with Security Council resolution 497 (1981). Israel must be made to comply with General Assembly and Security Council resolutions because non-compliance undermined the credibility of both the resolutions and the Organization. It was important to disseminate information about the Special Committee and, in that connection, the role of the Department of Public Information was indispensable. The United Nations web page on the question of Palestine and the United Nations Information System on the Question of Palestine were both useful. His delegation welcomed the Organization's coverage of the work of the Special Committee on the radio and in printed news articles. Efforts to find a just and lasting solution to the question of Palestine in accordance with international law, Security Council resolutions and the road map must be stepped up. In order to find such a solution, Israel should withdraw from the Occupied Palestinian Territories and occupied Syrian Golan and the Palestinian Authority should prevent all attempts to commit acts of violence against Israeli civilians.

21. **Mr. Sinha** (India) said his delegation had hoped that positive developments in 2005 and 2006 would lead to a redefinition of long-standing positions in the conflict, but those hopes had been dashed by the reluctance of the international community to recognize the elected Palestinian Government, the almost-complete suspension of international aid, Israel's non-payment of taxes and revenues to the Palestinian Authority and the near collapse of the Palestinian economy. Palestinian militants had resumed attacks and Israel's disproportionate retaliation for the abduction of a soldier had made it increasingly difficult to attain peace.

22. The report contained in A/61/500 outlined a number of human rights violations against the Palestinian people, including collective punishment, the separation wall, and the devastation of the Palestinian economy and civilian infrastructure. The Special Committee had been unable to visit the Occupied Territory, occupied Syrian Golan or, indeed, the Middle East at all. Lack of access to the region made collecting information difficult, and was cause for concern given the unprecedented levels of anger and frustration among Palestinians that had caused many in the region to question the role of the United Nations. As support for the Palestinian cause was central to the foreign policy of India, it had extended material and technical assistance, including in the infrastructure and pharmaceuticals sectors, to alleviate the humanitarian crisis. India welcomed the continuation of the Temporary International Mechanism to channel need-based assistance directly to Palestinians.

23. India condemned all acts of terrorism, incitement to violence and harsh and disproportionate retaliatory measures, and called on all parties to exercise restraint, reject violence and return to negotiations. Violence was not the solution to the conflict. Political dialogue was the only path to peace through the two-State solution. He called for urgent measures within the framework of the road map to improve security, the humanitarian and economic conditions of the Palestinian people, and to achieve the lasting solution of two peacefully coexisting States. He hoped that the Quartet and the regional parties would help to end the cycle of violence, remove restrictions on the normal functioning of the Palestinian economy and society, and help to usher in lasting peace.

24. **Mr. Ali** (Malaysia) said that his delegation fully endorsed the statements made by the representatives of Palestine and the Syrian Arab Republic, and was committed to the exercise by the peoples in the Occupied Territory and the occupied Syrian Golan of their inalienable right to self-determination. The report of the Special Committee indicated that the policies of the Government of Israel continued to adversely affect the humanitarian situation in the Occupied Territory, and aggravate the situation on the ground. The Government of Israel's continued refusal to cooperate with the Special Committee was counter-productive as it deprived Israel of the opportunity to express its views directly to the Special Committee. Israel should grant the Special Committee access to the Occupied Territory and should respond to the General Assembly's requests for information concerning the steps it had taken to implement General Assembly resolutions 60/105, 60/106 and 60/107. Israel deliberately withheld information on the actual humanitarian situation of the residents of the Occupied Territory from the international community, yet despite that lack of cooperation, it accused the Special Committee, which made the concerted effort to ensure that its work was impartial and accurate, of bias.

25. The continuing construction of the separation wall, which the International Court of Justice had declared contrary to international law, was a deliberate act of Israel to annex territory under the guise of self-defence and security. Israel must comply with General Assembly resolution ES-10/15 and stop construction of the wall, dismantle existing portions thereof and pay reparations to those affected by it.

26. Disproportionate military measures and harsh policies had caused further anguish and pain to an already oppressed population. Restrictive Israeli policies clearly demonstrated the desire of the occupying Power to control and suppress the lives of the residents of the Occupied Territory. The international community had to recognize that the unjust policies had persisted for too long. All methods to address and reverse the situation must be explored without delay. The Special Committee continued to play an indispensable role and the General Assembly should explore innovative ways in line with current realities, to fulfil the responsibilities and extend the mandate of the Special Committee until the human rights violations committed by Israel against the people

of the Occupied Territory had ceased and Israeli occupation had ended.

27. **Mr. Gómez González** (Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela) welcomed the report of the Special Committee, which had carried out its mandate despite extreme violence and a number of obstacles imposed by the Government of Israel, including denying the Special Committee access to the region in defiance of the international community and the United Nations.

28. His Government was alarmed by recent events in the illegally Occupied Territories and Lebanon and by Operation Summer Rain, and condemned all acts of violence. Israel continued to claim legitimate defence as justification for its actions. Yet, legitimate defence and proportionality were linked; the former was a cause for justification while the latter was an element of the former. If acts of legitimate defence were excessive, they were no longer legitimate and therefore Israel could not justify its continued harsh policies against the unarmed civilian population.

29. Israel continued to act with impunity knowing that it could count on the United States of America to veto the use of mechanisms established under the Charter of the United Nations to protect the human rights of the Palestinian people in the Occupied Territories. His Government condemned the invasion of the territory of any State. The United Nations should continue its work to achieve lasting peace in the region and should continue to adopt measures to rectify the situation of those long-suffering and heroic peoples. The international community should use appropriate measures so Israel would listen to reason. He called on the parties to resolve the crisis peacefully.

30. **Ms. Ziade** (Lebanon) said that although Israel claimed to be a democratic State waging war against terrorism, it was instead violating international humanitarian law and human rights. It should not persist in practices that had been internationally condemned — such as its occupation of Palestinian lands, its starvation, killing and displacement of Palestinians, its closing of Gaza checkpoints, or its building of a separation wall. The number of barricades had risen by 40 per cent in the past year; the killings had soared; the Israeli siege of the Gaza Strip had left three quarters of the inhabitants in poverty; even the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees (UNRWA) had been prevented from doing its work. The maintenance of peace and security demanded that the Special Committee fulfil its mandate and that Israel facilitate its work by cooperating with it.

31. The Syrian Golan had been occupied by Israel since 1967 and half a million of its inhabitants had been displaced by Israeli settlements. Since 1981, Israel had decided to impose its own laws, jurisdiction and administration in the occupied Syrian Golan even though the Security Council had declared that decision null and void in resolution 497 (1981). In Lebanon, the Israeli attack in the summer of 2006 had caused untold millions of dollars in damage, killed thousands, and injured and displaced thousands of others.

32. The peoples of the region deserved to enjoy prosperity in dignity and to live in peace, security and stability, looking forward to a better future. A comprehensive peace between the Arab nations and Israel could be achieved if the Arab Peace Initiative adopted in 2002 at the Arab League summit meeting in Beirut were implemented and international legality restored.

33. **Mr. Cohen** (Israel), speaking in exercise of the right of reply, said that Israel had left the Gaza Strip so that the Palestinians could control terrorist activities there and regulate their own lives, but instead terrorist groups had relentlessly begun firing rockets at Israeli population centres. Israel had no desire to harm innocent people but only to defend its citizens. Unfortunately, in the course of battle, such regrettable incidents as the one that had taken place in Gaza that morning did happen. Israel had expressed its regret over the death of Palestinian civilians in Beit Hanun. It had offered the Palestinian Authority urgent humanitarian assistance and immediate medical care for the wounded. Furthermore, its Defence Minister had ordered an investigation and a halt to artillery fire in the Gaza Strip until the completion of the inquiry into the circumstances, background and considerations that had led to the tragic result.

34. **Mr. Kanaan** (Observer for Palestine), speaking in exercise of the right of reply, said that early that morning Israeli tanks had deliberately shelled homes in Beit Hanun and killed 18 civilians, 14 of them women and children, and wounded more than 45 others. Israeli occupying forces had destroyed over 50 homes in Beit Hanun and damaged over 400 others as well as public utilities. The Israeli delegation had expressed regret

over that brutal massacre, but there could be no justification for bombarding homes.

35. Israel must be held accountable for such war crimes and State terrorism. Unfortunately, the international community's silence was encouraging it to violate international law with impunity and with total disregard for innocent lives. The international community must act now: the only way to re-establish peace and stability in the region was to end the Israeli occupation and aggression.

36. **Mr. Malecki** (Islamic Republic of Iran), speaking in exercise of the right of reply, expressed deepest condolences for the deaths of so many Palestinians that very morning. The Israeli delegation, at the end of three days of debate in the Committee regarding Israeli practices, had simply made an apology — implying that the Committee could say what it wanted but that Israel would go its own way.

37. **Mr. Taleb** (Syrian Arab Republic), speaking in exercise of the right of reply, observed that the Israeli representative had described the killing earlier that day of a score of Palestinian civilians — the kind of persons whom Israel called terrorists and a threat to the State — simply as an incident. Its well-known belligerence had led it to commit such a massacre even as the Committee was discussing Israeli practices, confirming the need for collective action to hold Israel accountable.

38. **Mr. Cohen** (Israel), speaking in exercise of the right of reply, said that again the Committee was being treated to lectures by the Islamic Republic of Iran and the Syrian Arab Republic, the world experts on terrorism. Those two countries had armed Hezbollah and trained its members to use their methods of terrorism. The leader of Hamas was harboured in Damascus and orders were being given to Islamic Jihad and to Hamas not to abide by the Quartet road map and work with Israel towards peace.

39. His Palestinian colleague had failed to mention the constant rocket launchings from civilian residential areas in the Gaza Strip — over 1,000 rockets had struck Israel since the Israeli disengagement. He again expressed his Government's regret over the tragic incident earlier that day, which was being investigated in the hope that all could then move forward.

40. **Mr. Malecki** (Islamic Republic of Iran), speaking in exercise of the right of reply, said that Israel, a dark and cruel regime that violated human rights, engaged in State terrorism, slaughtered innocent people and conspired against neighbouring States, had no right to speak about human rights and democracy. Having since its inception sought to wipe Palestine off the map, Israel had perpetrated the real holocaust. In world opinion, the name of Israel was synonymous with terrorism.

41. **Mr. Taleb** (Syrian Arab Republic), speaking in exercise of the right of reply, said that before the establishment of the Israeli entity, terrorism had been unknown in the Middle East. He pointed out that Hamas needed to maintain offices in Damascus in order to pursue its legitimate right of resistance to the Israeli occupation.

42. **Mr. Kanaan** (Observer for Palestine), speaking in exercise of the right of reply, and reminding the Israeli delegation that Israel was the only member of the United Nations termed an occupying Power, said that Israel was committing war crimes and State terrorism. As against one Israeli captive soldier, there were 10,000 Palestinian prisoners, including women and children, in Israeli jails. The rocket launchings into Israel were more than offset by the excessive, disproportionate and indiscriminate use of force against the Palestinian civilian population. It was to be hoped that one day Israel would realize that its occupation and aggression were the cause of the problems in the region.

The meeting rose at 12.10 p.m.

United Nations A/C.4/61/SR.25

General Assembly
Sixty-first session

Official Records

Distr.: General
28 December 2006

Original: English

Special Political and Decolonization Committee
(Fourth Committee)

Summary record of the 25th meeting
Held at Headquarters, New York, on Thursday, 9 November 2006, at 10 a.m.

Chairman: Mr. Acharya ..... (Nepal)

Contents

Agenda item 31: United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (*continued*)

Agenda item 32: Report of the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Palestinian People and Other Arabs of the Occupied Territories (*continued*)

Agenda item 33: Comprehensive review of the whole question of peacekeeping operations in all their aspects (*continued*)

This record is subject to correction. Corrections should be sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned *within one week of the date of publication* to the Chief of the Official Records Editing Section, room DC2-750, 2 United Nations Plaza, and incorporated in a copy of the record.

Corrections will be issued after the end of the session, in a separate corrigendum for each Committee.

06-60876 (E)

The meeting was called to order at 10.15 a.m.

Agenda item 31: United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (*continued*) (A/C.4/61/L.9-L.12)

Agenda item 32: Report of the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Palestinian People and Other Arabs of the Occupied Territories (*continued*) (A/C.4/61/L.13-L.18)

1. **The Chairman** drew attention to the draft resolutions under agenda items 31 and 32, the texts of which had been circulated that morning.

2. **Mr. Panggabean** (Indonesia), introducing the four draft resolutions under agenda item 31, which were largely the same as those of previous years except for minor technical changes, said that they were intended as an expression of support for the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) as it worked under growing financial constraints and increasingly difficult circumstances. In the draft resolution on persons displaced as a result of the June 1967 and subsequent hostilities (A/C.4/61/L.10), he drew attention to paragraphs 1, 2 and 3 in particular. In the draft resolution on operations of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (A/C.4/61/L.11), he singled out the third, fourth, sixth, eighth to eleventh, thirteenth, fourteenth, sixteenth and seventeenth preambular paragraphs, and paragraphs 1, 2, 7 and 10 to 13. In the draft resolution on Palestine refugees' properties and their revenues (A/C.4/61/L.12), he cited the first, fourth and seventh preambular paragraphs, and read out paragraphs 1, 2 and 5. In the draft resolution on assistance to Palestine refugees (A/C.4/61/L.9), he underscored the first, second and seventh to ninth preambular paragraphs and paragraphs 1 to 4.

3. He expressed the hope that, if consensus on the draft resolutions was not possible, they would receive the broadest possible endorsement, reflecting the international community's firm and continuing support for the humanitarian work of UNRWA and for the Palestine refugees.

4. **Ms. Hernández Toledano** (Cuba), introducing the five draft resolutions under agenda item 32, said that, as the human rights situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory deteriorated — most acutely in the Gaza Strip, which was under daily assault — the international community must take a firm position to induce the occupying Power to stop its continuing violations of international law and international humanitarian law.

5. In the draft resolution on the work of the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Palestinian People and Other Arabs of the Occupied Territories (A/C.4/61/L.13), she drew particular attention to the third to fifth and tenth preambular paragraphs and to paragraphs 1, 3 to 5, 7 and 8 (d). In the draft resolution on the applicability of the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War to the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and the other occupied Arab territories (A/C.4/61/L.14), she referred especially to the eighth preambular paragraph and paragraphs 2 and 3. In the draft resolution on Israeli settlements in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and the occupied Syrian Golan (A/C.4/61/L.15) she emphasized the second, sixth, seventh, thirteenth and fourteenth preambular paragraphs, as well as paragraphs 1, 4, 6, 8 and 9. In the draft resolution on Israeli practices affecting the human rights of the Palestinian people in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem (A/C.4/61/L.16), after drawing attention to the fourteenth, eighteenth and twentieth preambular paragraphs, she singled out a new nineteenth preambular paragraph condemning in particular the large-scale military assaults in recent months in the Gaza Strip resulting in extensive loss of life among Palestinian civilians, and referred also to paragraphs 2, 3, 8 and 9.

6. She noted that, except for appropriate updating of dates and figures, the draft resolution on the occupied Syrian Golan (A/C.4/61/L.17) was identical to those adopted in previous years, which had always received almost universal support. It gave a strong message against foreign occupation and the acquisition of territory by force and, in particular, the unlawful annexation by Israel of the Syrian Golan.

7. She hoped that the members of the Committee would give their broad support to the five draft resolutions.

8. **Mr. Zhang** (Secretary of the Committee) informed the members that draft resolutions A/C.4/61/L.9 to L.12 and L.14 to L.18 had no

programme budget implications. With regard to draft resolution A/C.4/61/L.13 on the work of the Special Committee, he stated, under rule 153 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly, that for the biennium 2006-2007 the General Assembly had approved a programme budget totalling $83,552,600 under section 23, Human rights, of which $233,100 was allocated to the Special Committee. Thus, the adoption of the draft resolution, including the action called for in paragraph 8 (a) to (d), would not entail any additional appropriation.

9. He drew the Committee's attention to section VI of General Assembly resolution 45/248 B, in which the Assembly had reaffirmed that the Fifth Committee was the appropriate Main Committee of the General Assembly entrusted with responsibilities for administrative and budgetary matters; and had reaffirmed also the role of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions.

10. **Ms. Rasheed** (Observer for Palestine), supported by **Ms. Kanerva** (Finland), suggested that the Committee should postpone taking action on the draft resolutions to allow for consultations between interested delegations.

11. **The Chairman** said he took it that the Committee wished to defer action on draft resolutions A/C.4/61/L.9 to L.17, as well as the pending draft resolution on Israeli aggression in the Gaza Strip (A/C.4/61/L.18), until the following week.

12. *It was so decided.*

Agenda item 33: Comprehensive review of the whole question of peacekeeping operations in all their aspects (*continued*)

13. **The Chairman,** recalling his non-paper on peacekeeping operation circulated at an earlier meeting, said that, after consultation with the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations, it had been decided that the Committee need take no further action at that point with regard to the report of the Group of Legal Experts originally called for by the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations in the report on its 2005 resumed session (A/59/19/Rev.1, chap. II, para. 40 (a), (b) and (c)).

14. The first report of the Group of Legal Experts on ensuring the accountability of United Nations staff and experts on mission with respect to criminal acts committed in peacekeeping operations (A/60/980) addressed the issue set out in paragraph 40 (a) of the Special Committee's report. The issues outlined in paragraph 40 (b) and (c) would be dealt with in a report to be submitted by the Group of Legal Experts at the sixty-first session of the General Assembly, as indicated in the Special Committee's report on its 2006 substantive session (A/60/19, para. 79).

The meeting rose at 11.55 a.m.